

salt or sugar by cheekaspbrak

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Because I'm in denial, Eventual Fluff, Homophobic Language, Hurt/Comfort, M/M, Richie Tozier Needs a Hug, Sharing a Bed, Sonia Kaspbrak's A+ Parenting, Teenagers, Trauma, Which never happens, if you want to see Richie put through more hell than he's been through already click now, this is going to take place entirely before the second movie

Language: English

Characters: Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier, Sonia Kaspbrak

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Summary:

Pennywise can shapeshift into anything, even the people you love.

salt or sugar

Author's Note:

This is supposed to be a lot of sweet and short moments between Richie and Eddie. I have kind of a 5 times + 1 vibe in mind, but there probably won't be that many chapters!

Skipping rocks at the Quarry, making art out of chewed bubblegum on the back wall of the arcade, catching frogs down by the little creek next to the kissing bridge. This was how he'd spent every summer before Pennywise. He was a normal little boy, playing Street Fighter and teasing Stan about his bird brain.

Then that fucking clown showed up.

They were all a little broken after that.

Richie was sure they all had nightmares — Bill had spoken about Georgie a few times since then, about how hard it was to move on, how sometimes he'd hear his voice in the middle of the night and wake up in a cold sweat. Mike would encourage everyone to share their struggles with the group to help themselves heal. Sometimes they did. Ben would talk about missing Bev now that she'd gone away to live with her aunt. Eventually, though it took him a while to fess up, he'd talk about how the nightmares of her hair on fire, skin rotting, chasing him down the school hallway would cloud over his memory of her until every time he thought of her he was a little scared and nauseous.

Richie understood that better than anyone else there.

He'd been in the clubhouse, reading a comic by himself and waiting for one of the others to show up and entertain him. He was hoping it would be Eddie. He was always hoping it would be Eddie.

Lo and behold, it was Eddie. This was unexpected — he hadn't seen him since he broke his arm and his mother whisked him away and certainly didn't expect to see him anytime soon. It was also

unexpected because he hadn't heard him come down the ladder, hadn't even seen him in his peripheral vision until he saw him moving in the dark corner of the clubhouse. If he didn't know any better, he would have thought he'd materialized in that dark corner.

He should have known better.

It was all so confusing, a little off-kilter, with Eddie plopping down in the hammock beside him and giggling at his jokes sweetly and girlishly without firing back like he normally would. And then he'd pressed up against Richie, looked him dead in the eye when he'd jerked back, and said *'What? Don't you want me to kiss you?'*, and then he kissed him and kissed him until Richie thought he was suffocating — wait, no, he *was* suffocating, he was *suffocating*, Eddie was *killing* him, he couldn't breathe, he couldn't *breathe* —

"Something the matter, Richie? I thought you liked me?" Eddie asked in a voice that wasn't his own, skin melting off of bone as he pulled away from Richie's mouth, a brown string of spit connecting them both. *"I always knew you were a faggot, Richie."* Flies buzzed, hundreds, thousands, crawling in the flesh as it puddled on the ground. *"Just a little fucking fairy. It's disgusting. If I touch you, I'll probably —"*

He still flinched when Eddie touched him, even a year later.

His brain, often simple-minded when cornered and petrified, would fight with itself, trying to decide if Eddie was a safe place or a shape-shifting monster. Every time he saw Eddie, it took the carousel in his brain a few minutes to wind down, even when he actively sought him out.

Even when he was tapping incessantly on his window at nearly one o'clock in the morning. His stomach still lurched when the shadowy figure of him swung open the curtains and stared at Richie, who was clinging to the trunk of the tree outside of his window like a koala.

"It's late," He said when he opened the window, reaching a hand out to help Richie in. Richie hesitated, staring at the hand and awaiting melting flesh.

"I know, sorry," He answered, shifting his grip on the tree. "It takes a

long time to please a woman like your mother.”

Eddie retched. “Please, you’re not even charming enough to get my *mother*, of all people.”

Richie grabbed onto his hand, then, allowing himself to be haphazardly pulled through the window. “Don’t fall, don’t fall, don’t fall,” Eddie pleaded. Richie fell anyway. “Fuck you,” Eddie replied, staring at him in a heap on the ground, pausing for a moment to listen for Mrs. K’s snores down the hallway.

“You certainly do not possess the same tender love as your mother,” Richie quipped, pulling himself off the ground while Eddie crossed the room. “I’m fine, by the way, thanks for asking.”

“It’s not my fault you decided to sneak over here in the middle of the night,” Eddie answered.

Actually, it is, Richie wanted to say, thinking of the nightmare he’d had. Eddie sucking face with him until he was holding him down, cutting off all oxygen until he’d woken up — panting and sweating. He could hardly see, with how dark the room is, but he could hear the slide of the drawers where Eddie was standing. He pulled off his shirt, used it to wipe the sweat off of his forehead.

“Here,” Eddie said as he stuffed a pair of bed shorts and the most over-sized t-shirt he owned into Richie’s hands. Richie was a bit surprised he hadn’t asked why he was here, yet. He almost always did. Maybe he was tired of never getting a real answer out of him.

“Have you grown at all since eighth grade?” The shorts were embarrassingly small. They’d be long on Eddie, but they were definitely shorter than anything Richie would dare to wear. He really needed to remember to bring pajamas one of these times.

“You’re so tall you could practically just stand on your tippy-toes to get through my window! I’m average height for a boy my age!” He pulled back the covers and tossed himself into the bed.

“Keep it down, pipsqueak. Mrs. K needs her rest after what I did to her, you don’t want to be responsible for waking her up.” Richie used

his hands to shoo Eddie to the other side of the bed after he put his glasses on the nightstand.

“That’s the third joke you’ve made about her in five minutes. I’m cutting you off. You’re becoming more insufferable every day.” He moved over and lifted the covers up for Richie, who immediately stuffed himself into the small sliver of bed left for him. Eddie bitched about how difficult it is to share a bed with him ever since he had his growth spurt before finally settling down on his side of the bed.

“Has she been bad lately?” He asked, turning on his side to take up as little room as possible. His eyes adjusted to the very dim lighting filtering in from the hallway under the crack of the door, and he could see Eddie, in the He-Man shirt he’s had since seventh grade that he could still fit into, somehow. He could see the way his eyebrows furrow, like a grumpy old man, the way they always have, accompanied by a small, fretful frown.

“Yeah, she’s been bad,” He admitted. “She won’t give it a rest on the meds, lately. Always wailing about how disrespectful I am when she’s ‘just trying to protect me’.” He put air quotes around the last part, rolling his eyes as he did so.

“Want me to take her out?” Richie formed his hands into a gun, making little ‘*pew pew*’ noises that get a few giggles out of Eddie.

“No,” Eddie laughed, “I just have to get through high school, right?”

“Then we’ll get the hell out of this shithole. You and me, Eds.” Richie watched Eddie glance at the bedroom door, then back into his eyes.

“I don’t know if I’m going to make it out of here,” He admitted, voice low and only dropping lower. “She’s suffocating me.”

He looked so fearful, eyes wide and shiny in the soft light. Richie was still not entirely aware of the power of Sonia Kaspbrak, of the limits she would go to if it meant keeping Eddie under her control. He didn’t need to know these things to hate her with the passion he did, though. He only needed to see how small Eddie became when he spoke of her to know all he ever needed to know about Mrs. Kaspbrak.

“Spaghetti, listen up,” Richie started, reaching out for one of his hands splayed in the space between them, “I’ll drag you by your ear out of this town the second we graduate. She can follow me the whole time bitching and moaning, I don’t care. You, Edward Spaghetti Kaspbrak, are destined for much greater things than what Derry has in store for you.”

Eddie stared at him in shocked silence for quite some time, likely because it was rare that Richie ever said something like this (though it was becoming more and more common as they grew up), but all Richie could think was *I’m holding his hand, he’s holding my hand, does he think this is weird? Is my hand sweaty? Will he pull his hand away?*

“So you’ll come with me?” Eddie finally spoke, face smushing further into his pillow. “When we graduate, I mean.”

There were a lot of things Richie wanted to say. There were *always* a lot of things Richie wanted to say. It was hard to hold back a lot of the things clinking around in his brain, beating against his skull, trying to wiggle their way to the forefront of his thoughts. He wanted to say ‘I’ll go anywhere you go’, or maybe ‘I’d have to check with Mrs. K first, you know how needy she gets’, or even ‘I love you and don’t think I could live without you’.

That last one made his cheeks burn hot and his eyes sting at the corners. That one was certainly not an option. None of the others were, either, he decided.

“What’s Bill without Ted? There’s no Richie without Eddie.”

“You’re stupid,” Eddie giggled, but he seemed pleased with the answer, and that was all Richie could ask for.

Author's Note:

If you have an idea you think would fit well into this fic, that you’d like me to write, comment it below and I’ll consider it! I love headcanons!

Talk to me on Tumblr @cheekaspbrak